

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

In the Office Action dated December 27, 2004 has been received and its contents carefully considered. Claims 1-28 are pending. Claims 1-8, 11-15, 17, 18, 21-24 and 27-28 have been rejected. Claims 1, 11, 17, and 23 have been canceled. Claims 2, 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 24, 25 and 27 have been amended.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections are respectfully requested in view of the following remarks.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Claims 9-10, 16 and 19-20 were objected to as being dependent upon a base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, claims 9, 16 and 19 have been rewritten in independent form and are believed to be allowable as indicated by the Examiner. Claims 10 and 20 depend from claims 9 and 19, respectively and are believed to be allowable.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1-8, 11-15, 21, 23-24 and 27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Tsuboi* (U.S. Patent No. 5,144,838). It is noted that the Examiner also referred to claims 17 in the prior art rejection under *Tsuboi*. Without conceding the propriety of the rejection claims 9, 16 and 19 have been rewritten in independent form to include the allowable subject matter as indicated by the Examiner in the previous Office Action. Accordingly, it is believed that claims 9, 16, and 19 are in condition for allowance.

Additionally, claim 25 has also been rewritten in independent form to include what is believed to be allowable subject matter similar to claims 9, 16 and 19. It is noted that no prior art is recited against claim 25 in the previous Office Action. Accordingly, it is believed that claim 25 is in condition for allowance.

Claim 1 has been canceled.

Claims 2-8 depend ultimately from independent claim 9 and are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 9.

Claim 11 has been canceled.

Claims 12-14 depend ultimately from independent claim 16 are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 16.

Claim 21 depends from independent claim 19 and is patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 19.

Claim 23 has been canceled.

Claims 24 and 27 depend from independent claim 25 and are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 25.

CLAIM REJECTIONS – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 21-22 and 27-28 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Tsuboi* (U.S. Patent No. 5,144,838) in view of *Savage* (U.S. Patent No. 4,128,011).

Claims 21-22 depend ultimately from independent claims 19 and are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 19.

Claims 27-28 depend ultimately from independent claim 25 and are patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 25.

Regarding claims 18 and 25-26, no prior art has been cited against the aforementioned claims. However, claim 18 depends from independent claim 19 and is patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 19. Claim 25 has been rewritten in independent form to include what is believed to be allowable subject matter similar to claims 9, 16 and 19. Hence, it is believed that claim 25 is in condition for allowance. Claim 26 depends from independent claim 25 and is patentable over the cited prior art for at least the same reasons as is claim 25.

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Application No. 10/673,133
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Patent

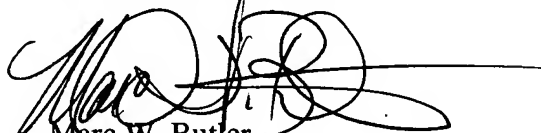
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. If it is believed that the application is not in condition for allowance the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney if it is believed that such contact will expedite the prosecution of the application.

In the event this paper is not time filed, Applicant petitions for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fee deficiencies or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 50-2036.

Respectfully submitted,

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